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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; April 3, 2009

TOP HEADLINES

Chosun Ilbo, Hankook Ilbo, All TVs
Lee, Obama Agree to Pursue UN Sanctions on North Korea

JoongAng Ilbo
Lee, Obama Confirm United Stance on North Korea

Dong-a Ilbo, Segye Ilbo, All TVs
Lee, Obama Agree to Cooperate on UN Sanctions for North Korea's
Rocket Launch and on KORUS FTA

Hankyoreh Shinmun
Lee, Obama to Discuss KORUS FTA in Bilateral Meeting Scheduled for
June

Seoul Shinmun, All TVs
Lee, Obama Committed to KORUS FTA

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

In the first summit between President Lee Myung-bak and U.S.
President Barack Obama on the sidelines of the London Group of 20
meetings, the two leaders agreed to push for international sanctions
through the UN Security Council if North Korea goes ahead with its
planned rocket launch. They pledged to pursue a "stern and unified"
international response against North Korea. (All, All TVs)

During the summit, President Lee and President Obama agreed to move
the long-delayed ratification of the KORUS FTA forward. According
to a Blue House official, President Obama has strong interest in
advancing the trade deal. However, Seoul officials did not say
whether it signalled that the Obama Administration will withdraw its
demand for renegotiation. (All, All TVs)

During the summit, the U.S. president thanked the ROK for supporting
stabilization efforts in war-torn Afghanistan. A Blue House
official said that Lee and Obama agreed to cooperate on the Pakistan
situation and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. (All, All TVs)

The ROK and the EU last month reached a provisional trade accord,
but failed to finalize a trade deal during Thursday's talks between

ROK Trade Minister Kim Jong-hoon and his EU counterpart Catherine Ashton on the sidelines of the G20 summit. The two leaders weren't able to narrow their differences on the so-called duty drawback scheme and rules of origin. (All, All TVs)

Sources said that the ROK and the U.S. have agreed to raise their surveillance level on North Korea if the North launches a rocket in the coming days. (JoongAng, Dong-a)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Citing informed military sources, CNN reported on April 2 that North Korea has begun fueling a rocket allegedly carrying a satellite, intending to launch it from its northeastern base. With the fueling having begun, a launch is likely only days away. (All, All TVs)

According to a senior air force official, North Korea has deployed a fleet of MiG-23 fighter jets along its eastern coast, where it plans to launch a rocket into orbit. (Dong-a, Hankook, Hankyoreh, Segye).

G20 leaders on April 2 hammered out the first measures of a rescue plan for the global economy. The G20 summit discussed regulating the financial markets and increasing funding for the International Monetary Fund (IMF). (All, All TVs)

U.S. President Barack Obama and Chinese Counterpart Hu Jintao agreed to fight protectionism and to improve military ties at their first face-to-face meeting in London on April 1. (Chosun, Dong-a,

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Hankyoreh, Segye, Seoul)

An ROK report claimed that the wife and children of the North Korean trade representative in Shanghai have recently defected to the ROK and are being questioned by ROK intelligence officials. (Hankook, JoongAng, Dong-a, Seoul)

Media Analysis

-North Korea

Most of the ROK media gave prominent play to a CNN report quoting informed military sources who stated that North Korea has begun fueling a rocket allegedly carrying a satellite to launch it from its northeastern base. ROK media reported that, with the fueling begun, a launch is likely only days away. ROK media also noted that, according to CNN, the payload of the rocket appears to have a "bulbous" cover, possibly indicating the presence of a satellite. Meanwhile, citing a senior U.S. military official, Conservative Chosun Ilbo reported that North Korea threatened to immediately retaliate at the slightest sign of any attempt to intercept its satellite. The newspaper observed that North Korea seems to be warning other countries against interfering with its imminent rocket launch.

-G20 Financial Summit

Most ROK media gave front page play to President Lee Myung-bak's summit with U.S. President Barack Obama, which took place on the sidelines of the Group of 20 meetings in London. ROK media reported that the two leaders agreed to push for international sanctions through the UN Security Council if North Korea goes ahead with its planned rocket launch. According to these media outlets, the leaders pledged to pursue a "stern and unified" international response against North Korea. Meanwhile, moderate Hankook Ilbo expressed skepticism at the likelihood of a UN Security Council resolution because of China and Russia's cautious stance. The daily reported of a high probability that either a Presidential Statement or a Presidential Press Statement, which carry less weight than a UN Resolution, could be adopted.

ROK media also noted that President Lee Myung-bak and President

Obama agreed to move the long-delayed ratification of the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) forward. In an inside page story, left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun reported that, during the first summit, the U.S. shifted its position regarding the KORUS FTA. The paper quoted a Blue House official as claiming that President Obama has strong interest in advancing the trade deal. However, the newspaper also observed that, although the ROK supports KORUS FTA ratification without re-negotiation or additional negotiation, this scenario is very unlikely given the Americans' stance thus far.

ROK media reported that the U.S. President thanked the ROK for its support in stabilization efforts in war-torn Afghanistan. A Blue House official said Lee and Obama agreed to cooperate regarding the Pakistan situation and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.

Chosun Ilbo editorial: "The ROK and the U.S. pledged to push for a "stern and unified" international response against North Korea. However, actually imposing UN sanctions on North Korea could be a daunting task given China and Russia's lukewarm attitude. The two countries should make sure that the UN Security Council sanctions North Korea for its rocket launch. Also, the ROK and the U.S. should explore every possible avenue to block North Korea's further provocations following its missile launch."

Dong-a Ilbo editorial: "In the first summit between President Lee Myung-bak and U.S. President Barack Obama, the two leaders reaffirmed the strong alliance and pledged to cooperate on the North Korean rocket launch and KORUS FTA issues. The two leaders should deliver on the statements that they made during the summit.

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Otherwise, these statements will end up becoming empty diplomatic rhetoric."

Hankook Ilbo editorial: "As North Korea has begun fueling the rocket despite strong warnings from the international community, the nation's imminent rocket launch has almost become a reality. The ROK and U.S. Presidents reaffirmed that North Korea's rocket launch would violate UN Security Council Resolution 1718 and agreed to closely cooperate to prepare a stern response. Alternative means, rather than military action, could be more effective at putting pressure on the North."

Opinions/Editorials

ROK AND U.S. PRESIDENTS REAFFIRM JOINT RESPONSE TO NORTH KOREA'S ROCKET LAUNCH
(Hankook Ilbo, April 3, 2009, Page 35)

As North Korea has already begun fueling the rocket despite stern warnings from the international community, the nation's imminent rocket launch has almost become a reality. Under these circumstances, a joint response by the ROK and the U.S. is critical. The ROK and U.S. Presidents reaffirmed that North Korea's rocket launch would violate UN Security Council Resolution 1718 and agreed to closely cooperate in preparing a strong response to increase pressure on the North. Ruling out a military response, such as intercepting the missile, should not be construed as a weak stance. Non-military means may be more effective at putting pressure on the North

Because both Presidents recognize that North Korea's rocket launch would contravene the UN Security Council resolution, bringing the matter before the UN Security Council is inevitable. During their summit on April 1, the ROK and Japanese leaders also agreed to bring this issue before the UN Security Council. However, we still need to approach Russia and China because their cooperation is essential to drawing a unified response from the UN Security Council. At this level, a measured realistic response can be much more effective than a recklessly strong one. While considering an appropriate response to North Korea (for its rocket launch), we should also make every effort to restore the momentum of negotiation and dialogue, including the Six-Party Talks.

ROK AND U.S. PRESIDENTS REAFFIRM COOPERATION ON NORTH KOREAN ROCKET

LAUNCH AND KORUS FTA ISSUES
(Seoul Shinmun, April 3, 2009, Page 31)

During his summit with President Lee, President Obama said that he is "preparing a UN Security Council resolution sanctioning North Korea." Because this is the first time that President Obama has directly mentioned a North Korea-related matter since taking office, we can attribute a fair amount of political weight to it. President Obama's statement is expected to put considerable pressure on the North.

Before the ROK-U.S. summit, there were concerns that the two leaders' differing ideological bents could hamper cooperation between their nations. However, their brief 30-minute meeting dispelled any such concerns. President Obama reaffirmed the strength of the ROK-U.S. alliance by stating that the ROK is "one of America's closest allies and greatest friends." We hope that the two leaders will build upon this initial meeting and further solidify the ROK-U.S. alliance at the Washington summit in June.

LEE AND OBAMA SUMMIT SHOULD GO BEYOND DIPLOMATIC RHETORIC
(Dong-a Ilbo, April 3, 2009, Page 35)

Although the initial ROK-U.S. summit was a brief 30-minute meeting held on the sidelines of the G20 summit, it compares favorably with official summit meetings because of the depth of the agenda and a friendly atmosphere. Particularly, the two leaders dispelled any rumored concerns over the Obama Administration's North Korea policy

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by reaffirming the strength of the ROK-U.S. alliance and pledging to cooperate closely on the North Korean nuclear and missile issues, the biggest issues facing the international community.

The North Korean Chief of the General Staff of the Korean People's Army issued an "important report" yesterday, threatening to "strike retaliatory blows at any attempts to intercept its rocket," while North Korea redeployed a squadron of jet fighters near a rocket launch site. In response to the missile launch which poses a threat to peace and stability in Northeast Asia and escalates military tension on and surrounding the Korean Peninsula, the ROK and the U.S. should make sure that they are fully prepared for any contingency and adopt prudent security measures. They should also reinforce a cooperative framework to ultimately dismantle North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. They should actualize the understandings reached at this summit not through empty rhetoric, but through actual practice.

A "STERN AND UNIFIED" MESSAGE FROM LEE AND OBAMA
(Chosun Ilbo, April 3, 2009, Page 31)

Presidents Lee Myung-bak and Barack Obama held their first summit in London on Thursday and agreed that a "stern and unified" response was necessary to deal with North Korea's launch of a long-range rocket. During the meeting, Obama said the U.S. will seek UN sanctions in response. Lee said it was necessary to demonstrate a strong resolve through the UN, while reconvening the Six-Party Talks at the appropriate time to use both dialogue and pressure.

The two leaders said North Korea's possession and proliferation of nuclear materials are unacceptable and vowed to seek the complete and verifiable dismantlement of its nuclear program. Regarding North Korea's intention to pursue direct dialogue with the U.S. while bypassing South Korea, Obama said it would be impossible for the communist country to drive a wedge in the long-standing alliance between Seoul and Washington and vowed to hold transparent and inclusive negotiations with South Korea involving all North Korea-related policies. It was a brief summit, lasting just around half an hour ahead of the G20 summit, but the two leaders sent a strong and clear warning to North Korea.

But North Korea began fueling its multi-stage rocket that day, the final step before a launch. And in what it called "an important report," broadcast by the official Korean Central News Agency,

Pyongyang said if its foes "recklessly" intercept the satellite the People's Army will "mercilessly deal deadly blows not only at the already deployed intercepting means but at major targets." North Korea has virtually admitted that the launch involved a long-range missile. If it launches it despite the final warnings of world leaders, Seoul, Washington and Tokyo will submit a resolution seeking UN sanctions against the communist country.

Considering the reluctance of China and Russia, which have veto rights at the UN Security Council, it will not be easy to impose sanctions against North Korea. But to make North Korea realize that the situation is grave, sanctions must be imposed. That is how the "stern and unified" response voiced by Seoul and Washington will prove to be more than mere words. South Korea and the U.S. must look into all possible measures to stop acts of provocation by the North.

Regarding the South Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, Obama said his administration had a strong will to advance the deal. Considering his negative stance until now, that is an important step. Both Seoul and Washington must strive to have their lawmakers ratify the FTA as soon as possible.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.)

A REALISTIC RESPONSE TO NORTH KOREA
(Hankyoreh Shinmun, April 3, 2009, Page 23)

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President Lee Myung-bak and U.S. President Barack Obama held a bilateral summit meeting yesterday while in London for the G20 summit. It is their first meeting since Obama was inaugurated, and primarily served to give introductions to each other. They met for a mere 30 minutes, within a busy schedule of discussions on multilateral agreements. It does not seem that they were able to discuss any of the issues between the two countries. Since trust between leaders is just as important as policy and ideology in any two countries' relations, it is nonetheless significant that the two men were able to meet—all the more so because their ideas and policies differ and some worried that it may be difficult for them to work together on various issues.

The two leaders exchanged views on North Korea, overcoming the global financial crisis, the US-Korea alliance, climate change, reconstructing Afghanistan and on other areas of global cooperation.

It is reported they spent most of their time talking about North Korea policy, since Pyongyang's "satellite launch" is just around the corner. A Blue House official later announced that they agreed on cooperating for the complete and verifiable dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear programs. They also agreed to put forth a "strict and united" response in the case that the North does launch a long-range missile, asserting that the international community also needs to put forth a "strict and united" response. One high-ranking government official explained that the leaders would see to it the United Nations Security Council discusses any missile launch, but that they would continue to work for the resumption of the Six-Party Talks.

They sought such an agreement because China and Russia oppose UN sanctions and the US wants to place greater weight on resolving the issue of North Korea's nuclear and missile capabilities through dialogue. This joint response, then, is a realistic one. The problem, then, is what to do after a "satellite" launch. It looks like there will be tension for some time if the international community imposes some level of sanctions and Pyongyang responds in anger. However, all the countries except North Korea are in agreement about resuming the Six-Party Talks process. Now that our government together with President Obama has decided to issue an appropriate warning while maintaining efforts to resume talks, it should work closely with the other countries to make the Six-Party Talks process happen.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is

identical to the Korean version.)

STEPHENS